

Date: November 13, 2012

To: Mark Ahrendsen, Director, Durham Transportation Department

From: Brian Fahey, Customer Relations Administrator

Re: Outreach Initiatives for Designing Better Bus Service Changes (Effective January 5, 2013) & On-Time Performance Update

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Triangle Transit and DCTC staff are continuing to implement many outreach initiatives to inform and educate citizens about the upcoming service changes, and are using feedback received after the phase I changes (September 29) to fine-tune our initiatives to ensure we reach as many riders as possible.

In reviewing customer feedback about experiences after the phase I changes, the following themes emerged.

- Riders felt informed about the phase I changes and many are aware of the upcoming changes. However, more work needs to be done to ensure we reach even more riders about the much larger changes in January.
- Riders conveyed that bus operators displayed “below average” customer service in assisting riders during the first week of the change

Triangle Transit and DCTC are working to implement even more outreach initiatives (beginning in early November) to ensure riders are informed about the upcoming changes. A full listing of our outreach initiatives is attached to this memo. The most successful outreach initiatives for the phase I changes were having staff available at Durham Station throughout the month of September to provide information, assistance, and new route/schedule brochures to customers, as well as automated announcements on all buses notifying customers of the upcoming changes. For the upcoming changes we will once again have staff assigned at Durham Station several days a week to provide information. Moreover, DCTC and Triangle Transit staff will also be assigned to “high boarding” stops throughout the system to ensure we reach a greater number of passengers, especially those who may not travel through Durham Station. Outreach at Durham Station and “high boarding” stops will last from November 12 to January 11. New automated announcements promoting the upcoming changes are already playing (in English and Spanish) on all vehicles (2 times on each outbound & inbound trip). These messages will become more detailed as we get closer to January 5<sup>th</sup>.

The other common theme we heard from riders was that bus operators were not helpful in providing assistance / information during the phase I changes. To address this concern we met with DCTC and First Transit to discuss these concerns and to develop a solution. As a result, DCTC developed a robust operator / customer service representative training program for the January changes, with a much greater emphasis on customer service expectations and skills training. All staff and operators will receive customer service skills training in November, and refresher training the week prior to the changes. The trainings will be conducted by DCTC management staff (who will also attend “train the trainer” courses). All operators / customer service staff will also receive mandatory route training that includes classroom training, on the road training, route videos, and an inclusive training workbook.

## Performance Improvement from the Phase I Changes

Triangle Transit planning staff has been closely monitoring the on-time performance of the routes 1, 6, and 11 since they changed on September 29<sup>th</sup>, and the results have been very positive. The table below shows the percent of trips for each route before and after the September 29<sup>th</sup> service change.

September 1 - 29, 2012		October 1 - 31, 2012	
Route	% of On-Time Trips	Route	% of On-Time Trips
1	50.8%	1A	80.0%
		1B	88.0%
6	65.2%	6	76.0%
		6B	67.0%
11	28.9%	11	88.0%

Our planners have also closely monitored the average travel times for each route, and the data suggests that the buses are making the trips in the scheduled amount of time. However, these new routes are still interlined with routes that have not yet been updated; and they are still holding for transfers from lower performing routes (that are changing in January). Once all changes are implemented, and DCTC adjusts their hold policy (effective January 5<sup>th</sup>), we expect to see even higher on-time performance values for these routes.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at 919-485-7501 or [bfahey@triangletransit.org](mailto:bfahey@triangletransit.org).

### Attachment(s):

- DBBS Outreach Initiatives for January Service Changes

## **Designing Better Bus Service Outreach Initiatives for January Service Changes**

### **Print Materials:**

- “Change is Coming to DATA” business size flyers to hand out during platform outreach and provided to bus operators to distribute. Pride Ambassadors have also been riding routes and distributing them to current riders.
- USPS Direct Mailers sent to 10,000 homes in January.
- Overview Brochures are available at the Durham Station. This was printed in English & Spanish.
- Information stuffers are being included in Durham water bills in December.
- Flyers will at Durham Station and at bus stops affected by the changes.
- Interior Bus Ads: Each bus has two signs that say “Change is Coming to DATA” and more details on the upcoming changes (printed in English & Spanish).

### **Public Outreach:**

- We have and will continue to review the upcoming service changes at each monthly public input meeting.
- Staff (dressed in promotional t-shirts) will be on the platform every Tuesday & Thursday (3pm-6pm) from early November to January 11, 2013 to distribute new route brochures and answer any questions.
- Staff (dressed in promotional t-shirts) will be stationed at high boarding bus stops (i.e. The Village, Duke Hospital) from early December to January 11, 2013 to distribute new route brochures and answer any questions.
- Our events coordinator has also made materials available with the Durham Housing Authority and other senior communities throughout Durham.
- Outreach at Duke and NC Central Universities.
- All service change information is being posted on our web site at [data.gotriangle.org](http://data.gotriangle.org).
- We are using social media to help spread the word, including the DATA, BCC, and GoTriangle Facebook pages along with the BCC and GoTriangle Twitter accounts. Web and print materials have also been shared with the City of Durham to distribute via their social media and public access channels.
- We have partnered with the Department of Social Services, and they have posters and print materials available to display and distribute to the public.

### **Media:**

- All DATA routes play internal announcements (In English & Spanish) 2 times each half hour promoting the changes. The messages get more specific as we near each service change date.
- Notifications are being posted on the real-time arrival signs at the Durham Station.
- Ads are running through the following mediums:
  - La Mega (Spanish Radio)
  - Herald Sun (Print)
  - La Ley (Spanish Radio)
  - Time Warner (TV Commercial)
  - ABC 11 (TV Commercial)
  - Que Pasa (Spanish Newspaper)
  - Route specific videos that are running on D8TV and YouTube.

### **Promotional Items:**

- Drivers are wearing “Change is Coming to DATA” buttons and outreach staff are wearing “Change is Coming to DATA” t-shirts to all outreach events.

## Training:

DATA bus operators, supervisors, and customer service staff will begin participating in a mandatory, comprehensive training program in early November. The training schedule also consists of customer service skills courses, and is as follows.

### Phase 1:

- Classroom Training
- Train the Trainer
- Operator / CSR Training (PowerPoint, Route Videos, Training Booklet) - Week of Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>

### Phase 2:

- On the Road Training (Small Groups)
- Train the Trainer
- Operator / CSR Training (PowerPoint, Route Videos, Training Booklet) - Week of Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>

### Phase 3:

- Classroom Training - Customer Service Skills & Expectations
- Train the Trainer
- Operator / CSR Training (PowerPoint, Route Videos, Training Booklet) - Week of Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>

### Phase 4:

- Refresher / Catch up Training (Classroom, On the Road, Customer Service Skills & Expectations) - Week of Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>.